

Family Participation and Activities

Parents and families, we ask your help in the following areas.

- † **Discussion and commitment:** Parents are asked to discuss with their child his/her readiness for Confirmation. The sacrament should be received freely, not as a result of conformity or pressure. Confirmation begins a fuller participation in the life of the Catholic Church as we deepen our relationship with God and try to live a life modeled on the values and teachings of Jesus.
- † **Service/Outreach Projects:** Parents are asked to give practical support in scheduling, transportation, supervision, discussion and follow-up, and above all a supportive attitude and good example.
- † **Support:** Parents can be a great help in offering friendly reminders about completing projects.
- † **Confirmation Liturgy:** Join us as a family and as a faith community to celebrate your child's Confirmation.



Confirmation Goals

I. To Build a Christian community

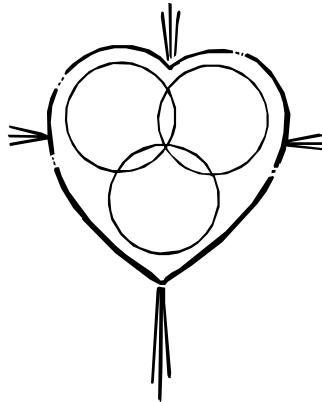
We seek to:

- ✚ provide a sense of belonging to the local Catholic community
- ✚ provide awareness of our role in the universal church
- ✚ provide experiences to give the candidate a personal sense of community membership

II. To Deepen Experiences of Personal and Liturgical Prayer

We work to:

- ✚ help candidates become more conscious of God's presence and more responsive to Him in their day-to-day living
- ✚ experience a variety of prayer forms and methods, especially the praying of Scripture
- ✚ participate in liturgical celebrations



III. To Offer the Challenges of a Christian Moral Life Based on the Gospel Principles Love, Service, and Justice

We offer:

- ✠ activities and discussions which will help the candidate assume adult level responsibility for their moral decisions and actions
- ✠ opportunities to use their talents and gifts in the service of others, especially the poor, the needy, the elderly and the disadvantaged
- ✠ opportunities to assume responsibly in the ministry and service aspects of parish life

IV. To Help the Candidate Deepen his/her Awareness of the Person of Jesus and His Teachings

We will:

- ✠ explain Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation with special connections to Baptism and Eucharist
- ✠ study the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual and the Church
- ✠ expect the candidates to have a basic understanding of the Catholic Church and its relationship to the other Christian and non-Christian religions

Choosing Your Sponsor

While the parents present the young person for Confirmation, another adult sponsors the candidate. (Canon 874#5).

A sponsor for Confirmation accompanies the candidate through the preparation on behalf of the faith community. The sponsor is a symbol of the adult Christian community and is representative of the adult community. One should choose someone who can actually accompany and assist you in unfolding the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life, a person who will help you bring the gift of maturity in the Christian Community.

Choose someone who is close by, easily accessible for talks and get together and willing to help you. A sponsor should be someone whom you admire and trust and who will be actively involved with your life. A sponsor must be confirmed and active in the Catholic Church. Parents cannot be sponsors. Choosing your baptismal sponsor would be very appropriate.

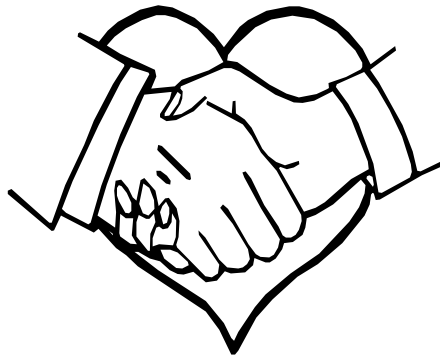
Sponsors are asked to:

- ✠ help with your service/outreach projects
- ✠ write a letter of recommendation to the Bishop
- ✠ attend the sponsor/candidate meetings

If your sponsor is also your mentor, make sure the person chosen can fulfill both sets of criteria.

Receiving A Mentor

The candidate is paired with a mentor. This person keeps ongoing contact with the candidate in areas of sharing aspects of faith. For example, the mentor might speak with the candidate about the interview that was held, the mentor might join with the candidate for Sunday Mass, the mentor might promise to be the “prayer partner” asking for God’s graces in the life of the candidate, etc. The mentor can be the sponsor. However, if a candidate chooses a sponsor who is not living nearby, then the mentor should be someone from the parish and someone whose name appears on the list of designated parish mentors.



Sponsor's Role

Hopefully you have been talking to your candidate about his/her service project, and growing in faith. You will be asked to participate with the candidate in the "share time" project. Share with them the good qualities you appreciate in them. Talk with them about how they can develop their talents for their own happiness and for the good of others.

Sponsor's Letter of Recommendation for Confirmation to the Bishop

The Purpose of the letter:

- ✠ to share the good qualities you see developing in your candidate
- ✠ to share with the Bishop the candidate's readiness for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- ✠ to support their desire for Confirmation

In the letter, refer to the following:

- ✠ How have you seen your candidate grow in faith in the last year?
- ✠ In what way do you feel he/she has prepared well for Confirmation?
- ✠ What special qualities or talents do you appreciate and commend them for?
- ✠ You might begin or end the letter with a sentence such as "I am proud to recommend (Sue Jones) for Confirmation because ... And therefore I am happy to support (Sue Jones') request for Confirmation."
- ✠ Be sure to refer to the candidate by first and last name. Address the letter to Bishop _____ (e.g. Raymond Burke). Give the letter to the Director of Religious Education by parish deadline date.

Candidates Letter of Request for Confirmation to the Bishop

One of the requirements for Confirmation is that each candidate write a letter of request. This letter is addressed to the Bishop. The purpose of the letter is to allow you the chance to express why you want to be confirmed.

Writing your letter can be a positive experience helping you organize your feelings and ideas about being confirmed. The letter will be mailed with your “share time” project reflections and sponsor recommendation letter to the Bishop.

Letter guidelines:

- ✠ Letter can be typed or written legibly in ink and personally signed.
- ✠ Begin letter by writing: Dear Bishop _____ (e.g. Raymond Burke).
- ✠ Answer the following:
 - 1) Why do you want to be confirmed?
 - 2) What does Confirmation mean to you?
 - 3) Share with Bishop Burke how you have prepared for Confirmation.
- ✠ Sign the letter with you full name.

Some Background and Answers to Questions

What are the American Bishops' Guidelines Regarding Confirmation ?

The Bishops state very clearly in the *National Catechetical Directory* that:

- ✠ Confirmation preparation must call Christians to a real relationship with Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit through a “vigorous sacramental life, prayer, study, and service.”
- ✠ The **Faith Community**, made up of the pastor, parents and other committed adults, has the primary obligation to provide programs and participate in preparing those to be confirmed.
- ✠ Parents are called to renew and strengthen their own faith. They must set an example of mature faith and involvement in their parish through their own efforts to grow spiritually and be of service to others.
- ✠ The program should include a required minimum number of hours of service, retreats and renewal experiences, a letter of request, longer periods of preparation, and the use of adult supervisors.

How is Confirmation Related to Baptism?

“As a sacrament of Initiation, Confirmation is intimately related to Baptism and Eucharist. Christians are reborn in Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation and sustained by the food of Eucharist. Specifically, in Confirmation they are signed with the gift of the Spirit and become more perfect images of their Lord. Confirmation renews and strengthens the Christian’s baptismal call to bear witness to Christ before the world and work eagerly for the building up of God’s body.”

“Confirmation emphasizes the transformation of life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in God’s fullness.”

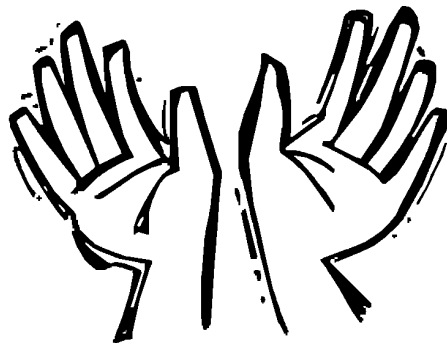
(From the National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the U.S. #118)

Why are Parents and Other Adults so Involved in the Program?

As the Bishops remind us, parents are the first and most important examples to their children of how to live their Christian faith. The activities attempt to foster and strengthen the faith which the family shares with one another. This time of preparation for Confirmation is an opportunity for parents and adults to learn, deepen their own growth in their faith, and share their commitment to Jesus and the Church with young people. As a parish event, Confirmation is prepared for and celebrated as a time of renewal and recommitment for the whole parish. Students need parents and other adults as models for their growth in faith and Christian living.

Does the Candidate need to Choose a Confirmation Name?

At Baptism we were initiated into the fullness of life in the Church. Confirmation is a reaffirming of this baptismal commitment. Therefore, we do not need to choose another name even though the opportunity is available.



Ministry of Christian Service

“Evangelization Share Project”

Jesus said, “I came not to be served, but to serve.” As baptized Christians we are called to reach out to those in need. Jesus asks us to help each other, to be present to one another, and to share our gifts and talents with others. We stress that the candidates participate in projects of SERVICE rather than of time commitment. However, we do recommend that service hours be a minimum of ten (10) hours each year and be developed by the candidate. The Evangelization Share project with Candidate and Sponsor needs to be 3 or 4 hours. The rewards of your experiences will be those which come from giving of yourself to others in need. Be sure to write a short reflection on your experience of the service project. These are some points to consider:

- † What kind of response did you get from the people you worked with?
- † What did you learn about working with people?
- † How did this project help you understand better the value and importance of Christian Service?
- † What talent or strengths did you discover about yourself while doing this project?
- † What did you feel you learned about caring, helping and living by doing this project?
- † This written reflection should be turned in to the Director of Religious Education as part of your ongoing high school Religious Education file.

Interview

The interview is an informal visit with the candidate and a member of the catechetical staff. It is a time to reflect on the experience of the Confirmation process and discern the readiness of the candidate.

The goals of the interview are the following:

- ✠ find out, first of all, if the candidate is approaching the sacrament freely of his or her own desire;
- ✠ assess, as best as possible, where the candidate is in his or her faith development;
- ✠ ask the candidate to demonstrate a knowledge, both theoretical and personal of the Holy Spirit;
- ✠ ask the candidate to demonstrate a grasp of the Catholic teachings and the mission and ministry embraced by the faith community; (this objective can be accomplished as the candidate answers questions from the “Handbook for Today's Catholic.”)

The candidate will initiate the interview with any of the designated catechists chosen for this objective.

The Interviewer will submit a summary of the interview to the Director.



